Wildfire Threat Tabletop Exercise

Situation Manual

[Insert Date]

[Insert Caveat]

This Situation Manual (SitMan) provides exercise participants with all the necessary tools for their roles in the exercise. Some exercise material is intended for the exclusive use of exercise planners, facilitators, and

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evaluators, but players may view other materials that are necessary to their performance. All exercise participants may view the SitMan.

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Exercise Agenda

Start Time	End Time	Activity
7:45 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	Registration
8:30 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	Welcome and Participant Briefing
8:45 a.m.	9:45 a.m.	Module One: Intelligence and Information Sharing
9:45 a.m.	9:55 a.m.	Break
9:55 a.m.	10:55 a.m.	Module Two: Incident and Response
10:55 a.m.	11:05 a.m..	Break
11:05 a.m.	12:05 p.m.	Module Three: Short-Term Recovery
12:05 p.m.	12:30 p.m.	Hot Wash

**All times are approximate*

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Exercise Overview

Exercise Name	Wildfire Threat Tabletop Exercise (TTX)
Exercise Dates	[Indicate the start and end dates of the exercise]
Scope	This exercise is a TTX planned for [exercise duration] at [exercise location]. Exercise play is limited to [exercise parameters]. This exercise was developed using materials created by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) for a CISA Tabletop Exercise Package (CTEP).
Mission Area(s)	Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery [Select appropriate Mission Areas]
Capabilities	Planning, Intelligence and Information Sharing, Public Information and Warning, Operational Coordination, Economic Recovery, [insert other core capabilities]
Objectives	1. Review emergency preparedness plans and response procedures to a wildfire. 2. Assess procedures for coordinating and sharing information within organizations, between organizations, and with the public. 3. Discuss the coordination between private sector organizations and responding local, state, and federal agencies under the National Incident Management System (NIMS). 4. Review organizational interdependencies and recovery plans. 5. [Insert additional exercise objectives as necessary]
Threat or Hazard	Wildfire
Scenario	An interactive, discussion-based exercise focused on wildfire threatening a community. The scenario consists of three modules: Intelligence and Information Sharing, Incident and Response, and Short-Term Recovery.
Sponsor	[Insert the name of the sponsor organization, as well as any grant programs being utilized, if applicable]

Participating Organizations	[Please see Appendix A.]
Point of Contact	[Insert the name, title, agency, address, phone number, and email address of the primary exercise point of contact (POC) (e.g., exercise director or exercise sponsor).]

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General Information

Exercise Objectives and Capabilities

The following exercise objectives in Table 1 describe the expected outcomes for the exercise. The objectives are linked to capabilities, which are the means to accomplish a mission, function, or objective based on the performance of related tasks, under specified conditions, to target levels of performance. The objectives and aligned capabilities are guided by senior leaders and selected by the Exercise Planning Team (EPT).

Exercise Objectives	Capability
Review emergency preparedness plans and response procedures to a wildfire threat.	✓ Planning ✓ Operational Coordination ✓ Public Information and Warning
Discuss the coordination between private sector organizations and responding local, state, and federal agencies under NIMS.	✓ Planning ✓ Operational Coordination
Assess procedures for coordinating and sharing information within organizations, between organizations, and with the public.	✓ Planning ✓ Operational Communications ✓ Public Information and Warning
Review organizational interdependencies and recovery plans.	✓ Planning ✓ Economic Recovery
[Insert additional objectives as necessary].	✓ [Insert additional capabilities as necessary].

Table 1. Exercise Objectives and Associated Capabilities

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

The term *participant* encompasses many groups of people, not just those playing in the exercise. Groups of participants involved in the exercise, and their respective roles and responsibilities, are as follows:

- **Players:** Players are personnel who have an active role in discussing or performing their regular roles and responsibilities during the exercise. Players discuss or initiate actions in response to the simulated emergency.
- **Observers:** Observers do not directly participate in the exercise. However, they may support the development of player responses to the situation during the discussion by asking relevant questions or providing subject matter expertise.

- **Facilitator:** The facilitator provides situation updates and moderates discussions. They also provide additional information or resolve questions as required. Key EPT members also may assist with facilitation as subject matter experts (SMEs) during the exercise.
- **Moderators:** Moderators are responsible for admitting and signing in all participants to the virtual exercise, monitoring the chat area for questions and / or issues, and controlling participant audio.
- **Evaluators:** Evaluators are assigned to observe and document the discussion during the exercise, participate in data analysis, and assist with drafting the After-Action Report (AAR).

Exercise Structure

This exercise will be a discussion-based, facilitated exercise. Players will participate in the following three modules:

- Module One: Intelligence and Information Sharing
- Module Two: Incident and Response
- Module Three: Short-Term Recovery

Each module begins with a multimedia update that summarizes key events occurring within that time period. After the updates, participants review the situation and engage in discussions of appropriate [insert mission area] issues.

Exercise Guidelines

- This exercise will be held in an open, no-fault environment wherein capabilities, plans, systems, and processes will be evaluated. Varying viewpoints, even disagreements, are expected.
- Respond to the scenario using your knowledge of current plans and capabilities (i.e., you may use only existing assets) and insights derived from your training.
- Decisions are not precedent setting and may not reflect your jurisdiction's/ organization's final position on a given issue. This exercise is an opportunity to discuss and present multiple options and possible solutions.
- Issue identification is not as valuable as suggestions and recommended actions that could improve [insert mission area] efforts. Problem-solving efforts should be the focus.
- The assumption is that the exercise scenario is plausible, and events occur as they are presented. All players will receive information at the same time.

Exercise Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise is based on the exercise objectives and aligned core capabilities. Players will be asked to complete a participant feedback form. These documents, coupled with facilitator observations and evaluator notes, will be used to evaluate the exercise and then compiled into the AAR / Improvement Plan (IP).

Module One: Intelligence and Information Sharing

Scenario

[Insert Month, Day, Year]: [Time]

According to the National Weather Service (NWS), the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions increased the risk of wildfire in the area. With a shortage of rainfall, temperatures rising, and humidity dropping, a "Fire Weather Watch" is issued. This alert warns residents and fire departments of weather events that could result in extreme fire behavior over the next 24–72 hours.

Outdoor burning bans are placed in effect to reduce wildfire potential. Local parks, campsites, trails, and forestlands mandated a zero tolerance burn policy and are working to deter any visitors from starting campfires or using open-flame grills.

Local news stations report that the U.S. Forest Service responded to several brush fires in the region. The threat for wildfire was extended to populated areas, including communities near wildfire-prone lands. Residents have also been encouraged to create 100 feet of defensible space around their domestic structures to establish a safety zone from airborne embers and low-lying vegetation.

Discussion Questions

1. What established plans prevent or deter a wildfire in your area?
    a. Who is responsible for the plan?
    b. Are multiple agencies involved in the planning process?
2. How would local response organizations gather the information on potential wildfire threats?
    a. Are there any state or local resources that monitor conditions in areas prone to wildfire outbreaks?
3. Who would be responsible for monitoring alerts from NWS, if any?
    a. How would they disperse the alert across agencies?
4. What information or warnings are being released to the public?
    a. Who is responsible for the initial messaging?
    b. How quickly is information being released?
    c. What methods are being used to distribute information?

   d. What should the content of the messaging be?
   e. Is targeted information sent to businesses or people in the impacted area?
   f. Are businesses or other organizations providing their own messaging to their employees?
   g. How are messages coordinated across the different agencies and organizations?

5. Do agencies and organizations cross-train on roles if a wildfire were to occur?
6. How would the private sector expect to receive information on potential wildfire threats?
7. Do any private sector stakeholders in this area use paid weather services?
   a. Do those services include wildfire monitoring?
8. What are some key best practices in prevention, protection, and mitigation?

Module Two: Incident and Response

Scenario

[Insert Month, Day, Year + 48 Hours]: [Time]

Around 11:00 a.m., several individuals report a small brush fire 35 miles outside of town near a popular hiking and biking trail. With the shortage of rainfall in the past month, low vegetation and brush easily begin to catch fire near the origin point. Although several fire apparatuses are en route to the brush fire, they take over an hour to arrive because of the secluded area and difficult terrain.

Conditions quickly worsen, exacerbated by dry foliage and erratic wind gusts. The fire spreads to the south and west of the origin point, directly downhill and into town. Winds begin to carry embers over a quarter mile away and the fuel source shifts from vegetation to residential structures. As homes catch on fire from surrounding brush and embers landing on rooflines, fire personnel become unable to contain the fire.

Residents take note of the looming smoke and airborne embers. Panicking, several communities begin to self-evacuate.

Discussion Questions

1. What assets are available to immediately respond to an incident?
    a. What local resources are available?
        i. What state resources are available?
        ii. What federal resources are available?
    b. What law enforcement assets are staged to respond?
    c. What emergency medical services (EMS) assets are staged to respond?
    d. Are there volunteer organizations or other partner groups that would have resources that would participate in the immediate response?
2. What command structure would be set up for the wildfire and how would it evolve over the course of the afternoon and evening?
    a. Which agencies would be involved?
    b. How would arriving mutual aid agencies integrate into the command structure and at which locations (unified command at scene, emergency operations center [EOC], hospital, etc.)?

   c. What is the role of private sector stakeholders in this command structure?
      i. Are they trained on Incident Command procedures?
      ii. Is there cross training with public agencies on the private sector's incident priorities?

3. Would there be sufficient resources immediately available to address an incident of this scale?
   a. If not, are there established mutual aid agreements to assist?
4. How would resources be coordinated across all incident operations?
   a. Who is responsible for that coordination?
5. What are your organization's information sharing responsibilities during an incident?
   a. What information sharing processes would your organization use?
   b. What resources are used to disseminate information?
   c. Who would oversee messaging in your organization?
      i. Would your messaging be coordinated with any other organizations? If so, how?
   d. Who is responsible for communicating information to potentially impacted businesses?
6. Does your organization have a designated Public Information Officer (PIO)? If so:
   a. Are protocols in place for addressing media inquiries?
   b. How do they receive information from the incident?
   c. Do they have pre-built templates for use in different kinds of emergencies?
   d. Would your organization use social media during an incident?

Scenario Update

[Insert Month, Day, Year]: Time [Incident +4 Hours]

[Insert location] mutual aid resources are dispatched to respond to several residential structure fires that started throughout the area. Police begin to aid with evacuation routes and are directing people to stay with family, friends, or at shelters out of town. Across the region, phone systems, including cellular communications and 911, become overloaded and unreliable.

Discussion Questions

1. What impact does the expanding incident area have on the command structure?
2. What procedures are taken to stand up an EOC?
    a. What level of activation do you anticipate for this incident?
    b. What are the communication procedures for the different levels?
3. Would Incident Command establish a joint information center (JIC)?
    a. If so, who would be included in the JIC?
4. Does your organization have established mutual aid agreements with other organizations?
    a. Whom would you rely on and for what resources?
    b. Are these agreements formal or informal?
    c. Would the aid be automatic, or would it have to be requested?
        i. If requested, whom would you contact and how would you do it?
        ii. Do you have a backup contact and communication method in case you cannot use the primary?
    d. What are the financial considerations?
    e. Are there any limitations to what mutual aid can do (legal, procedural, equipment, etc.)?
5. How do responding agencies ensure accountability of personnel during consolidation?
6. Who is responsible for notifying state or federal agencies of the incident, and at what point in the incident would this occur?
    a. What resources or actions would you expect from state or federal agencies?

b. How would arriving state and federal resources integrate into the command structure?

7. What are your evacuation procedures?
    a. Are there plans in place for managing mass evacuation?
        i. Who is responsible for activating the evacuation procedures?
        ii. Is there a specified rally point for evacuees?
        iii. Would this location be impacted by weather?
        iv. Are there secondary and tertiary rally points in case the primary point is a part of the incident or overwhelmed by evacuees?
    b. What established plans or procedures work with access and functional needs populations?
    c. What agencies would control an evacuation?
        i. What training has been done on these plans?
8. What communication methods (e.g., alerts, email, telecommunications, text message, and special tools) do first responders use to share information with other responders?
    a. What communication methods do local first response agencies use to communicate with their local counterparts (i.e. how do police officers communicate with fire or medical personnel)?
    b. What communication methods do local first response agencies use to communicate with their respective mutual aid partners?
    c. Are these methods the same? If not, are they interoperable?
    d. How are communications coordinated when multiple response agencies from multiple jurisdictions are on-scene? Who is responsible for this?
    e. How do you communicate with the private sector?
    f. If the cell network is overwhelmed, does that affect your communication procedures?
    g. Are there alternate communication procedures?
    h. Do you use social media to communicate with the public? If so:
        i. At what point in the incident would this begin?

Scenario Update

[Insert Month, Day, Year + 12 Hours]: Time

As wind gusts remain constant, the fire spreads throughout town, and there are several reports of multiple major structures in the city on fire. Hospitals are overrun, and there are reports of multiple fatalities in the hardest hit areas, though exact casualty counts are not yet known. Over 10 residential structures and a local furniture warehouse are designated as working fires. Utility companies, medical personnel, and first responders are working around the clock to restore services, preserve property, and save lives.

Discussion Questions

1. How are priorities established for the next operational period?
2. If mutual aid resources have been exhausted for the initial incident, how are additional resources secured for the ongoing response?
3. What role do city and county governments play in this scenario?
    a. Who is responsible for informing the mayor, county commissioners, or other local elected officials?
    b. Have protocols been established with elected officials so that they know what to expect during incident response and local agencies know what elected officials' priorities are?
    c. Have elected officials been briefed on Incident Command System (ICS)?
    d. What support from first response agencies would the mayor or county commissioner expect in holding a press conference on the incident?
4. Who is responsible for communicating information to family members of those killed or injured?
5. At what point would hospitals be alerted to the incident?
    a. Who is responsible for alerting area hospitals and coordinating patient priorities across the region?
6. Would mass care facilities, family assistance, or reunification centers be set up? If so:
    a. At what point in time?
    b. Which agencies are involved, and who is responsible for leading this effort?
    c. What procedures are in place?

d. Which facilities would be used?

e. Which agency or person, if any, would be in charge?

7. How does your organization conduct accountability checks of impacted employees?
8. What are some of your agency's best practices for response?

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MODULE THREE: SHORT-TERM RECOVERY

Scenario

[Insert Month, Day, Year + 5 Days]: [Time]

Local authorities estimate [insert number] of fatalities and [insert number] of casualties with several still in critical condition in area hospitals. With a significant number of residents still reported missing, there is an expectation that casualty counts could rise as area searches continue.

Several days later, there are still several structures in the town on fire, including residential homes and commercial properties. Dozens more are reportedly uninhabitable from smoke and water damage. Local fire and police resources are depleted, and state-wide resources have been activated to aid in the recovery effort.

Residents have not been allowed back into the town and are being asked to stay at local shelters, hotels, or with friends in the surrounding area. Businesses are still unable to physically operate.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the short-term recovery procedures for your organization or business?
    a. Is there a formal recovery plan and, if so, does it cover wildfires?
    b. What assistance would you look for from volunteer, community, or faith-based organizations?
    c. What would your organization do to support recovery in the community?
    d. What assistance would city agencies provide to private sector organizations?
    e. What assistance would you request or expect from the state or federal government?
    f. Are there contracts in place to assist in the cleanup effort?
    g. Who makes the decision on when areas will be reopened?
        i. How do they determine when it is safe for residents and visitors to return to the area?
        ii. How is that decision communicated to the public and the media?
    h. At what point would you consider the recovery complete?

2. Does your organization have a business continuity or continuity of operations plan?
    a. What are the short-term recovery objectives for your organization?
    b. What are the implications of being unable to open or operate for a period of time?
        i. What would the financial impact be on your organization if your building was closed due to a wildfire?
        ii. Would your business close as a result of this incident, even if it did not directly impact you?
    c. Does your organization have the ability to move key operations to another location?
        i. If so, how long would this take?
    d. Do you have any insurance that would assist given this scenario?
3. Given the scenario, what measures would be needed to support your organization's employees following this event?
    a. How is information communicated to employees during the days following the incident?
    b. Would leave or time-off be granted?
    c. What mental health services or trauma counseling services does your organization have available for your employees?
    d. If operations are suspended for a length of time, is there financial assistance available to employees?
4. How would your community manage fatalities resulting from this wildfire?
    a. Is there a mass fatality management plan in place?
5. What impact would the wildfire have on the residents?
    a. What impact would the wildfire have on businesses?
6. At what point would you consider the impacted area and all associated organizations or businesses stabilized and back to a steady state?

Scenario Update

[Insert Month, Day, Year + 1 Month]

Residents are slowly moving back into town, but several families' homes were destroyed. Neighbors begin working together to aid in recovery efforts around the community by cooking meals and donating relief items, including clothing, linen, toiletries, and medical products.

Additionally, many businesses in town are still not open due to fire and water damage. As job availability opportunities decline, workers begin to look for temporary employment by relocating out of the area. Financial implications of rebuilding both homes and new business facilities leave many individuals wondering if they should move back into town.

Discussion Questions

1. Does your community have a formal or informal long-term recovery plan in place to aid those whose homes have been destroyed?
    a. What does it consist of?
    b. Who is responsible for enacting this plan?
2. How are private sector stakeholders and citizens integrated into long-term recovery planning and decision-making?
3. What resources are available to assist your organization with recovery?
    a. Are pre-arranged agreements in place to obtain key resources?
    b. If so, how are these agreements activated (i.e., what type of coordination and request process is required)?
4. What financial impact would the wildfire have on your community?
    a. What efforts are being made to drive financial recovery?
5. How would your community encourage businesses and residents to return after this incident?
6. Are there best practices for recovery that you would like to share?
7. What recovery activities will continue after your community transitions from long-term recovery to the "new normal"?

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Appendix A: Exercise Participants

Participating Private Sector Organizations
[Insert private sector participants]

Participating Local Organizations
[Insert local participants]

Participating State Organizations
[Insert state participants]

Participating Federal Organizations
[Insert federal participants]

Other Participating Organizations
[Insert other participants]

Other Participating Organizations

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APPENDIX B: RELEVANT PLANS

[Insert excerpts from relevant plans, policies, or procedures to be tested during the exercise.]

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APPENDIX C: ACRONYMS

Acronym	Term
AAR	After-Action Report
CISA	Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
CTEP	CISA Tabletop Exercise Package
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EPT	Exercise Planning Team
ICS	Incident Command System
IP	Improvement Plan
JIC	Joint Information Center
NIMS	National Incident Management System
NWS	National Weather Service
PIO	Public Information Officer
POC	Point of Contact
SitMan	Situation Manual
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TTX	Tabletop Exercise

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